

## CLAIMS

### We claim:

1 1. A method for characterizing a service provider, comprising the acts of:

2 a) gathering information on characteristics of a service provider;

3 b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

4 c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

5 d) providing the report to at least two clients of the service provider;

6 wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the service provider is an ASP.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the service provider is an ISP.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

1 7. A method for a management service to advise a client of an application service provider  
2 regarding the performance of the application service provider, comprising the acts of:

3 a) gathering information on performance of an application service provider;

4 b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

5 c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

6 d) providing the report to at least two clients of the application service provider;

7 wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

1 9. The method of claim 7, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

1 10. The method of claim 7, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

1 11. A method for a management service to advise a client of an application service provider  
2 regarding the security of the application service provider, comprising the acts of:

3 a) gathering information on security of an application service provider;

4 b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

5 c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

6 d) providing the report to at least two clients of the application service provider;

7 wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

1 14. The method of claim 11, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

1 15. A method for a management service to advise a client of an application service provider  
2 regarding the availability of the application service provider, comprising the acts of:

3 a) gathering information on availability of an application service provider;

4 b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

5 c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

6 d) providing the report to at least two clients of the application service provider;

7 wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of providing comprises the act of selling the  
2 report.

1 17. The method of claim 15, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

1 18. The method of claim 15, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

1 19. A method for a management service to advise a client of an Internet service provider  
2 regarding the performance of the Internet service provider, comprising the acts of:

3 a) gathering information on performance of an Internet service provider;

4 b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

5 c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

6 d) providing the report to at least two clients of the Internet service provider;

7 wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

1 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

1 21. The method of claim 19, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

1 22. The method of claim 19, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

1 23. A method for a management service to advise a client of an Internet service provider  
2 regarding the security of the Internet service provider, comprising the acts of:

3 a) gathering information on security of an Internet service provider;

4 b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

5 c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

6 d) providing the report to at least two clients of the Internet service provider;

7 wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

1 24. The method of claim 23, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

1 25. The method of claim 23, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

1 26. The method of claim 23, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

1 27. A method for a management service to advise a client of an Internet service provider  
2 regarding the availability of the Internet service provider, comprising the acts of:

3 a) gathering information on availability of an Internet service provider;

4 b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

5 c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

6 d) providing the report to at least two clients of the Internet service provider;

7 wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

1 28. The method of claim 27, wherein the step of providing comprises the act of selling the  
2 report.

1 29. The method of claim 27, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

1 30. The method of claim 27, wherein the report comprises soft copy.